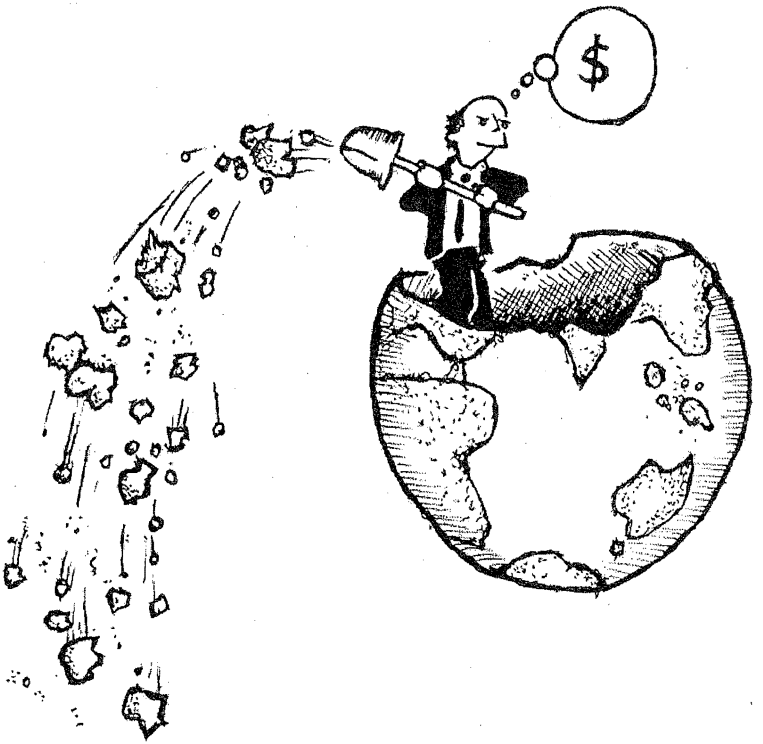
G20 AND APEC.

A ZINE FULL OF WORDS AND IDEAS ABOUT WHAT THEY ARE, WHAT THEY DO, AND HOW WE CAN BUILD SOMETHING BETTER.



WWW.STOPG20.ORG

Call out to G20

In the beginning is the Scream. We Scream
-John Holloway

Our starting point is our refusal: NO! ENOUGH ! BASTA! We realise that lives worth living can only be found against capitalism and all else flows from this. To approach the G20 is to approach a possibility to rupture from the normality of daily life, to jam the functioning of the global empire of capital and its manufacture of social consensus and from this affirm other ways of being. For this to be realised though involves an open process of questioning how we can work collectively in ways that assert our autonomy from capital and can aid the generation of refusals. It is the hope this short piece can ad to this act of cartography, this charting of a new land. Numerous open processes are need to work out what is common that allows us to act collectively, and how can we affirm our difference and multiplicity in a way that is still militant and effective.

To begin with we should be clear that no anti-summit protest will destroy capitalism - because capitalism is not a summit. Capitalism is a lived social relationship that exists everywhere throughout society: capitalism is the school, the kitchen, the bus stop. It is the process in which the collective social activity of humanity and earth are reified into structures, commodities and accumulations from which we are alienated and impose their will on the living of our daily lives. It is not Bad Corporations, or Greedy Politicians - it is neither George Bush nor Ronald McDonald. Capitalism is what we are compelled, forced and enticed to build everyday with the most minute of our actions. Yet that said it is also incredibly broken, fractured and precarious. As much as everyday we rebuild capitalism through our activities, we also rebel, refuse and act 'other' in numerous gestures of defiance and autonomy. Some of these are small, covert, individual, some the reverse. The destruction of capitalism is the manifestation of our numerous, countless NOs! into the open collective realisation of new worlds and new relationships. No one rules capitalism, there is no cabal of bankers and politicians, no fat man with a top hat pulling the strings. Yet capitalism is managed, it is administrated; new regimes of power, of production, of the creations of subjectivity etc Events like the G20 provide certain sections of capitalism an opportunity to implement certain elements of global order. It also serves a use in the creation of the appearance of a smooth and functioning world, the appearance of a forum where the tough questions of the global are being dealt with by a generation's best and brightest.

We go to the G20 with desires and with questions. Disrupting the G20 could help in the preventing the smooth running of Capital's current and future offensives against us. It provides us an opportunity to break the normality of capital's operations. Also it provides us with the opportunity to manifest what the Leeds May Day Group call, "moments of excess" (http://www.nadir.org.uk/excess.html); moments when what is other, what is more, and what is beyond capital manifest in an event. Moments that both radically rupture and disrupt the normal operations of power and produce accumulations of new ways of relating and possibility through them into the future.

The success of any of these elements, to negate or affirm, rest on our abilities to connect a big event with the myriad struggles that make up daily life. This does not mean how an "activist" can form links with middle level bureaucrats from trade unions, but rather how we as part of the multitude can bring into being connections of insubordination with each other. Of course all this just raises more questions about how these can be achieved.

Part of it is how we work to manifest our selves. It seem that this most often takes places through structures that are firmly wedded to the ossifying remains of social democracy - such as student unions; or through relatively small micro-networks of friendship and affinity. The first is totally

repellent. The second is preferable but inadequate.

We need to find ways of autonomous organising away from the restrictions, defeat and hierarchy of social democracy and we need to find ways of taking our links of everyday solidarity into new forms that can produce enough heat to destroy capitalism.

To this end, we could start to cohere a block or serious of blocks(lets call it a 'mobilisation') around a number of points or questions. Placing ourselves (not uncritically) in the lines of revolt of our recent past, we could adopt the Hall Marks of People's Global Action as our first basis of commonality. These are:

1. A very clear rejection of capitalism, imperialism and feudalism; all trade agreements, institutions and governments that promote destructive globalisation
2. We reject all forms and systems of domination and discrimination including, but not limited to, patriarchy, racism and religious fundamentalism of all creeds. We embrace the full dignity of all human beings.
3. A confrontational attitude, since we do not think that lobbying can have a major impact in such biased and undemocratic organisations, in which transnational capital is the only real policy-maker;
4. A call to direct action and civil disobedience, support for social movements' struggles, advocating forms of resistance which maximize respect for life and oppressed peoples' rights, as well as the construction of local alternatives to global capitalism.
5. An organisational philosophy based on decentralisation and autonomy

These Hallmark has the advantage of being both broad enough to include a number of revolutionary anti-capitalist orientations despite their differences, whilst also separating this manifestation from reformists, racketeers and recuperators. But more is needed than this. To really connect to our daily insubordinations, such a mobilisation need to place itself firmly in our daily struggles - in our workplaces, the streets, schools, hospitals etc. To this end the mobilisation could work to create various consultations around us, where our grievances against life under capital, and the genius of our resistances can accumulate and communicate. This process could be placed before and after the actual G20 meeting, to facilitate the circulations of our experiences and solidarity. The hope here is that this would be a break from abstract points of opposition about "good causes" (fair trade, anti-GE etc) into a "real movement that abolishes the present state of things."

G20 MOBILISATION IN MELBOURNE

by rodney

The 2006 G20 meeting of finance ministers, reserve bank governors and the heads of the World Bank and IMF will take place in Melbourne on November 18-19. This will be the most significant gathering in Melbourne of people responsible for pushing corporate-led globalisation, neoliberalism and capitalism since the World Economic Forum in 2000. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers concerning the G20.

WHAT IS THE G20?

Australian treasurer Peter Costello describes the G20 as the "premiere forum for discussion of global economic issues" (http://www.g20.org).

The G20 was formed in 1999 in the wake of the South East Asian financial crisis, with the brief to help stabilise the international financial system to ensure continued economic growth. It consists of yearly meetings of the finance ministers and reserve bank governors of the world's largest economies, and also includes the President of the World Bank, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, and a representative from the European Union and the European Central Bank. The chairs of the International Monetary and Financial Committee and Development Committee of the IMF and World Bank also attend.

Member nations are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK and the US. Together they comprise two-thirds of the world's population, 90% of global GDP and 80% of world trade.

The G20 is chaired by a different member nation each year - in 2005 it was hosted by China, and this year it will be by Australia. In addition to the yearly meetings, other gatherings and seminars are held at other times throughout the year in the host nation - in 2006, there will be meetings of deputy-level officials in Sydney and Adelaide. The G20 does not have staff nor a secretariat of its own, and relies on the rotating host country to administer it.

WHAT'S DISCUSSED AT THE G20?

The primary goal of the G20 is to discuss and develop policies that promote the "high and sustainable growth" of the global economy. It does this in part through promoting policies consistent with the G20 Accord for Sustained Growth agreed to in 2004. This Accord stresses a range of neoliberal policies, including:

- The elimination of restrictions on the international movement of capital
- Deregulation
- Flexible labour market conditions
- Privatisation
- Enforcement of intellectual and other private property rights
- Creating a business climate conducive to foreign direct investment
- Global trade liberalisation (through the WTO and bilateral free trade agreements)

In 2006 the theme of the G20 meeting will be "Building and Sustaining Prosperity". The issues to be discussed will include domestic reforms to achieve "sustained growth", global energy and resource commodity markets, 'reform' of the World Band and IMF, and the impact of demographic changes due to an ageing population.

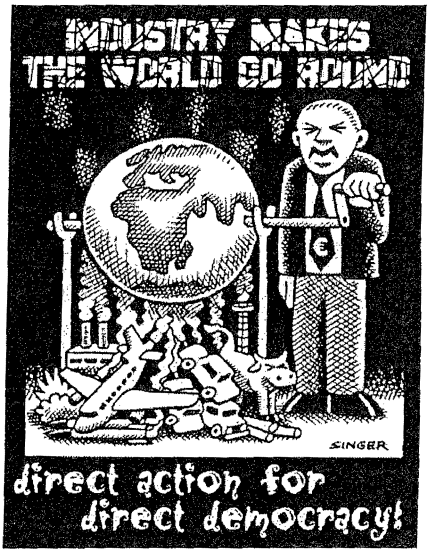
WHAT INFLUENCE DOES IT HAVE?

While the G20 is often described as an informal space for discussing ideas and developing policies, the following statements by representatives of the G20 (see http://www.g20.org) suggest that it has a major role in governing the (corporate-led, neoliberal) global economy:

"The G-20's economic weight and broad membership gives it a high degree of legitimacy and influence over the management of the global economy and financial system."

"By contributing to the strengthening of the international financial architecture and providing opportunities for dialogue on national policies, international co-operation, and international economic and financial institutions, the G-20 helps to support growth and development across the globe."

G20 discussions can have a significant influence on the policies and activities of the World Bank and the IMF. Given the horrible destruction these institutions cause to people and environments throughout the world, and the tremendous threat they pose by pushing corporate-led globalisation and 'developments' that fuel dangerous climate change, G20 meetings have a dangerous influence on the future of our planet.



The G20 also develops policies on a range of issues concerning the destructive international financial system. It's an opportunity for the likes of Peter Costello to not only confirm their neoliberal policies back home, but also to standardise these policies across much of the globe.

Furthermore, the G20 is a key means through which the industrialised nations attempt to influence the policies of the 'emerging economies' of Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey. These large 'developing' nations could play a crucial role in resisting corporate-led globalisation, given that most of their people want an end to the destructive neoliberal policies of their governments and of the World Bank, IMF and the WTO. Furthermore, a stance against neoliberalism by these emerging economies would help smaller Majority ('Third') World nations to also resist.

The G20 is a forum in which leading officials from the overdeveloped world attempt to court the governments of these emerging economies into an "international consensus" of privatisation, trade liberalisation and market fundamentalism. We have already seen over the past couple of years how the US, European Union and the WTO Secretariat have successfully co-opted the governments of Brazil and India to sell out the interests of impoverished nations - in order for them to join the 'big boys' of global economic and political leadership.

The 2004 Chairperson of the G20, Hans Eichel, stated that "it is not without reason that many observers accord the G20 an important role - for some, even the most important role in the future - in global governance".
(http://www.bundesbank.de/g20/download/public/20041101_eichel_en.pdf)

WHAT WOULD THE G20 BE DOING IF IT WAS SERIOUS ABOUT REFORMING THE WORLD BANK AND THE IMF?

The G20 claims to be interested in reforming these international financial institutions to loosen their control by the United States and the European Union. Peter Costello is reportedly keen to press for Asian countries in particular to have a greater role in their governance.

However, the communiqué arising from the 2005 G20 meeting in China stressed that the IMF should exercise "enhanced surveillance of the global economy", and that the macroeconomic policies of the IMF and World Bank should continue. Far from reforming these institutions, the G20 supports the grip that these institutions have on impoverished nations across the globe (see http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org, http://www.eurodad.org, http://www.50years.org for examples of their destructive influence).

If the G20 was serious about "building and sustaining prosperity", it would dismantle these institutions and replace them with other agencies that supported relocalisation, self-determination and regional self-reliance, and which limited the power of capital, private property rights and transnational corporations to prey on communities and the environment - but this would all be going against the vested interests of who and what the G20 really represents.

WHAT WOULD THE G20 BE DOING IF IT WAS SERIOUS ABOUT ADDRESSING GLOBAL ENERGY ISSUES?

The 2006 G20 meeting will include a strong focus on the challenges to economic growth posed by the rising cost of oil (as did last year's meeting in China).

However, rather than facing up to the realities of peak oil and dangerous climate change, the G20 seeks to strengthen neoliberal policies that emphasise private property rights over the commons (air, land, water, etc), and which rely on markets to distribute 'energy and resource commodities'. Furthermore, the G20 seems no more intent than the G8 to take action on dangerous climate change - it hardly even mentions it.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO NEOLIBERALISM THAT WE COULD BE ADVOCATING FOR?

The G20 plays a major role in pushing corporate-led globalisation, neoliberalism, capitalism and the global growth economy as the only way to run an economy and a society. Many people believe that this model destroys natural environments, colonises indigenous communities, impoverishes most of the world's people, isolates workers and farmers, and creates great hardships for women. The model breeds militarisation, war-driven competition and police states. Despite the mantra of 'sustainable economic growth' it is inherently unsustainable in the context of environmental limits, dangerous climate change and peak oil.

Millions and millions of people across the world are living out alternatives to this model, from Argentinean solidarity economies and Venezuelan co-operatives to Indian communities regaining control over the commons, from South African anti-privatisation movements to community food gardens in Australia. The G20 protests represent an opportunity for people to claim their right to advocate for these alternatives based on values such as participatory democracy, environmental justice, human dignity, cooperation, community, relocalisation and fairness.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT SOME MAJORITY 'DEVELOPING') WORLD NATIONS ARE REPRESENTED IN THE G20?

Civil society groups in Argentina, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico and South Africa have spent two or more decades protesting against the neoliberal policies of their governments. Unfortunately, the finance ministers of many Majority World nations are pressured into

following the demands made by the World Bank and the IMF. We have a special responsibility to act in solidarity with the demands of people throughout Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Pacific for changes to their governments' policies, and to transform or dismantle the international financial institutions that drive them.

WHY IS THE G20 RELEVANT TO AUSTRALIA?

The last 12 months (well, several years!) have seen some of the worst advances of neoliberalism in Australia's recent history - the complete privatisation of Telstra, Industrial Relations laws, anti-terror laws, nuclear waste dump legislation, welfare-to-work changes and the enforcement of voluntary student unions. The Coalition government is conducting a major attack on people's rights in order to push neoliberalism, and Peter Costello will be waving the flag of the government's 'achievements' in November at the G20. The neoliberalism that is hurting the world is the same neoliberalism that is hurting us.

WHY SHOULD I BECOME INVOLVED IN CHALLENGING THE G20?

The effects of neoliberalism and corporate-led globalisation are everywhere - they affect us personally, our families, our communities and the planet. Neoliberalism and corporate-led globalisation causes wars, famine, poverty, homelessness, racism, bigotry, insecurity, unhappiness, emptiness and depression - and environmental destruction. Dangerous climate change is building, and peak oil may have a huge impact.

To create a world of safety, respect, cooperation, diversity, human rights, strong communities and liveable environments for ourselves and our children, we need to act. The G20 is pushing us in the wrong direction.

HOW BIG WILL THE PROTESTS BE?

The G20 does not have the profile of the World Economic Forum, where 20,000 people successfully blockaded, demonstrated and created an alternative three-day solidarity economy outside the Melbourne Crown Casino in September 2000. No heads of government nor major corporate CEOs will be attending. However, it will attract considerable media attention, given that such 'notorious' people as Paul Wolfowitz (President of the World Bank) will be there. It's an opportunity for autonomous groups, networks and non-government organisations to expose corporate-led globalisation for what it is, and to creatively suggest alternatives to capitalism.

WHAT COULD HAPPEN AT THE PROTESTS?

This is up to all of us to decide! Groups and networks can design their own autonomous actions, street theatre, teach-ins and community organising events. It's an opportunity to show our dissent against corporate capitalism and neoliberalism, to present alternative pathways for our society based on economic relocalisation and strong, open communities, and to educate ourselves and others about how to gradually spend less of our time, energy and money feeding the corrupt global economy.

HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?

The official G20 website is http://www.g20.org.

There are many groups and networks involved in organising activities, events and protests concerning the G20.

For more information, contact Rodney of the Reclaim Globalisation collective at Friends of the Earth at rodney@foe.org.au.

When APEC comes to town ...

In 2007, Australia will be the happy host country of APEC - the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation. APEC is yet another ingredient in the WTO / IMF / WB / BIT / FTA alphabet soup that serves up a bitter brew of unregulated free trade and corporate control, regardless of the social and environmental consequences.

For John Howard, APEC means the chance to host the biggest meeting of world leaders ever held in Australia from 8 - 9 September in Sydney. It means the chance to continue pushing a free trade model that is fuelling unsustainable growth and climate change. It means the chance to promote clean coal and nuclear energy through APEC's Energy Working Group.

For us, it means a chance to challenge and expose APEC's model of corporate globalisation that places the legal rights of corporations above those people and the environment. It means a chance to put climate change and corporate globalisation firmly on the agenda of the 2007 Federal election. It means a chance to join together across different campaigns, to build power and a shared vision of what a better world may look like.

What is APEC and why should you care?

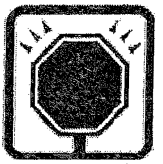
APEC was launched in 1989 and has grown to include 21 countries, ranging from rich countries such as Australia, the US and Japan to poor and developing countries, such as Vietnam, Thailand and PNG. Each year, APEC is hosted by a different member country. This year it is Vietnam. Next year, Australia will be the happy host. Throughout 2007, Australia will host over 100 meetings of government and business representatives, culminating in a meeting of government leaders in Sydney in September.

APEC is a multilateral forum that operates through a series of carefully scripted meetings. Unlike the World Trade Organisation, it does not make binding decisions or agreements. Government leaders come to APEC as leaders of 'economies' not elected leaders of governments. This means that political accountability is effectively side-stepped. APEC commitments bypass parliamentary ratification and there are no formal channels for engagement with civil society. As a forum for leaders of economies, the 'non-economic' effects of trade liberalisation on people and the environment are effectively silenced.

APEC's main game is to achieve what is known as the Bogor Goals for 'free and open trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific by 2010 for developed economies and 2020 for developing economies.' Free and open trade is doublespeak for removing government regulations that restrict the activities of transnational corporations. In short, it is a directive to label most areas of society as tradeable commodities, from water to health to medicines and essential food crops, and Liberalise! Privatise! Deregulate! Within APEC member countries, these policies have fuelled a race to the bottom on workers rights and environmental standards, as transnational investment has moved to export processing industries in the Global South to take advantage of low wages and lax environmental regulations. Last years APEC forum in Korea was confronted by thousands of farmers whose food security and livelihoods been threatened by subsidised agricultural imports.

APEC means business when it comes to climate change

The economies of the APEC member countries account for over 60% of the world's energy demands. In 1990, APEC established an Energy Working Group (EWG) to 'maximise the energy sector's contribution to the region's economic and social well-being.' The EWG meets twice a year, is made up of government officials from energy policy departments. A couple of years ago, the EWG established the APEC Energy Business Network, to allow industry to feed into the EWG. The Energy Business Network includes such familiar friends as: Rio Tinto Australia (Andrew Lloyd), BHP Billiton (Brett Mattes), Woodside Energy (John Philp), Unocal (Laura Hudson) and Texaco (Julie Garcia).



Not surprisingly, the EWG has a developed program of research and workshops on 'clean fossil energy' and nuclear power. In April, Australia co-hosted an "APEC Business and Climate Change" workshop in Seoul, with over 100 industry leaders and key policy makers from APEC countries. The proceedings of this workshop are not publicly available but it seems that a large focus of this meeting was on technological fixes for climate change, such as carbon capture and storage. In August, the EWG will host a training course for APEC members on nuclear power in South Korea and research papers developed for the EWG include "The role of nuclear power in the energy development of the APEC region" and "CO2 storage prospectivity of selected sedimentary basins in the region of China and South East Asia".

Australia co-chairs the EWG and the Energy Business Network and, with the US, appears to be using these APEC structures to push the Asia-Pacific Partnership of Clean Development and Climate, also known as the 'Coal Pact', on to other APEC members. The Coal Pact is effectively an alternative to the Kyoto Protocol and sets no targets for greenhouse gas reductions. In August last year, the US briefed the EWG on the Coal Pact proposal and in February, the EWG sponsored a Clean Coal Seminar in Thailand.

There is more information about the EWG at http://www.ewg.apec.org/.

So, what does happen when APEC comes to town?
APEC has a full agenda in 2007. As well as the leaders summit from 8 - 9 September in Sydney, there will be over 100 meetings of government and business representatives throughout Australia in 2007. It is likely that the Federal Election will be called in October.

APEC is not a decision-making body and therefore, we can choose to let it come and go unnoticed and unchallenged. However, APEC's sustained agenda of meetings throughout Australia provides an opportunity for APEC to be more than just a one-off 'anti' protest. If we start organising now, we have the opportunity to set the agenda for 2007 and to build power and relationships across a series of decentralised actions and events throughout the year.

By Jemma Bailey, trade justice campaigner with the Australian Fair Trade & Investment Network (AFTINET)

A reflection from the G8 in Scotland, 2005

(Heavily edited to be one wee page)

Anarchism is about how we interact with each other and the planet more than it is about how we interact with authority and the state, When we face off with the cops in the streets of anywhere, we are not building a new world, we are challenging aspects of the old world. While this is obviously an essential part of a mass movement, it is not something we should focus on in a critiques of our movement or used as a way to gage our successes. Property destruction does not mean a successful action nor does the amount to which people resist police violence. While these two things are important at certain times, we can't ignore the reality. War is property damage and fascists resist the police too...

We are not radical because we fight the police or smash the windows, we are radical because we struggle to find ways to interact that break down social barriers and lead to the downfall of authoritarian government and capitalism and bring an end to ecological destruction. We are radical because we care so much that we are willing to throw our bodies on the line in defense of our ideals and our visions.

So we must address our movement's successes based on the amount to which our actions are instigating and creating change in the world, how much we as individuals are instigating and creating change in the world, and how much things are changing. How are you participating? How is your group participating? Are we growing?

Our main focus as a movement should be building a society that is intolerable of injustice, that opposes the destruction of life and the planet, that desires liberation and change, that does not settle for political scraps and does not fall for political scams. We're not really going much in that direction when we continuously face off against thousands of armed cops in pre-arranged battle spots.

More than anything else, the G8 in Scotland finalized a feeling inside of me that we have fallen into a sort of trap where we perpetually confirm the media-image of anarchists. We fall for the bait they set. When there's a fence, we'll goddamn tear it down. When there's a line of cops, we'll charge them with a bunch of flimsy shields and make-shift weapons. When we see corporations, we'll smash their windows and act like it a world-changing action, when we get arrested, we'll cry out as if we didn't see if coming, as if we didn't realize we were the enemy in a war against those who respect life, liberty, and justice.

So, there's two huge questions at hand, and a movement with any future must ask them both and spread itself out enough to work on both levels. 1. Where is the system of rule going and how do we stop it? 2. Where is society going and how do we influence it?

That's what we need to be asking ourselves and each other. The system is going for more control, more dominion over life, more control over your choices, more prisons, endless war, and increasing criminalization of dissent and opposition. Society is going for more acceptance of oppression, more hatred toward "foreigners" and xenophobic violence, more fear of the unknown and fear of change, more demanding of protection from the state, more carelessness for the fate of others, and more passive acceptance of corruption, lies, and violence from the state.

While we combat the state and corporations in their spheres; mobilizations, street protests, direct actions, etc., we must also act within the greater mass of society as an alternative to the absurdity we are settling for and reach out to people to break the cycle and fight for liberating change.

The new world is not just in our hearts, it's in our hands, and we have to make it real.

AFFINITY GROUPS

What's an affinity group?

An affinity group is a small crew people who work together autonomously on direct actions or other projects. You can form an affinity group with your friends, people from your community, workplace, or organisation. Sometimes we also call 'em blockade teams, action groups, cells, action collectives, and a whole bunch of weird and wonderful names.

Affinity groups challenge top-down decision-making and organising, and empower those involved to take creative direct action. Affinity groups allow people to "be" the action they want to see by giving freedom and decision-making power to the affinity group.

The affinity group model was used long long ago by ace anarchists in Spain in the late 19th and early 20th century, and was re-introduced to radical direct action by anti-nuclear activists during the 1970s, who used decentralised non-violent direct action to blockade roads, occupy spaces and disrupt "business as usual" for the nuclear and war makers of the US.

Startin' up our own affinity group

We're exceedingly keen to support cats in starting up affinity groups in their community - for 2006, for G20 and beyond. We'd love to come help out with discussions, preparation, training and skillshares for direct action and a whole bunch of things (give us a call!)

Some of the ideas we've got for startin' up our own affinity groups are:

- Get together a bunch of your mates with similar interests in issues and actions.

- Start hanging out, doing actions and building trust. We reckon trust is a key element for affinity groups to function. You could do a direct action training together, a banner drop in preparation for a protest, talk through where y'all stand on big questions and have good idea of how you will work together, brainstorm possible protest situations and talk through responses. Knowing people's fears, weaknesses and strengths helps us support each other in our actions. In our crew, we try to do something every month - a graffiti run, a dumpster café, film screening in a spunky squat, an occupation... just to keep meeting up!

- Have a think about what sort of decisions your affinity group need to make before a protest. Where you stand on big issues, what your aims are, how you wanna interact with police, debriefing processes after actions and other organising, how you want to communicate during actions, how you are going to make decisions (consensus, voting, appoint decision makers, and chatting about quick decision making).

- Chat with other crews on their aims and tactics, how you might want to work together, what support you need, what methods of communication between affinity groups could be used before and during a protest (spokescouncil, blocking up, phone number swap for communication people, fist raised huddles, cycle communication crews, walkie talkies)

- Your affinity group might even wanna take on a **specialised role** in the way it interacts with other crews, or operates within the breadth of the protest or campaign. You could *specialise* in cop-watchin', legal observation, food, communication, medical, or good old common garden variety blockading. With a role focus, each affinity group can do their jobs and support the work of other affinity groups. In this way, many affinity groups form an interdependent network that achieves so much more than a large group of individual activists.

- You might wanna form a **cluster** with other affinity groups to work on a certain task or part of a larger action. A cluster could be responsible for blockading an area, organising one day of a multi-day action, or putting together and performing a mass street theatre performance. Clusters could be organised around where affinity groups are from (such as da Brisvegas mob), an issue or identity (such as Climate Bloc), or action interest (such as street theatre or blockading).

- You might wanna participate in a **spokescouncil** - a larger organising structure used in the affinity group model to coordinate a mass action. Each affinity group (or cluster) can empower a spoke (representative) to go to a spokescouncil meeting to decide on important issues for the action. For instance, affinity groups need to decide on a legal/jail strategy, possible tactical issues, meeting places, and many other logistics. A spokescouncil does not take away an individual affinity group's autonomy within an action; affinity groups make there own decisions about what they want to do on the streets.

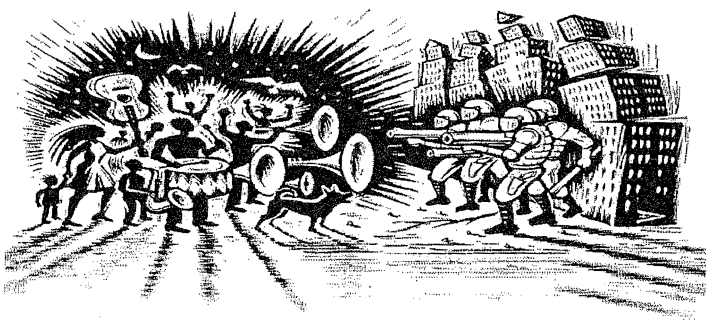
- We reckon the aim at the end of the day is to look after yourself and each other, have fun, and work towards a maximised degree of constructive social change.

What can an affinity group do?

Anything!! We can use affinity groups for mass or smaller scale actions - to drop a banner, blockade a road, provide back-up for other crews, do street theatre, block traffic riding bikes, organise a tree sit, or play glockenspiels in a radical marching band.

What makes affinity groups so awesome for actions is that they can remain creative and independent and plan out their own action without an organisation or person dictating to them what can and can't be done. There are endless possibilities for what our affinity groups can do. Let's be creative and remember: direct action gets the goods!

Revo love & thanks to Starhawk's notes from S11, the ratbags at the Ruckus Society, the Direct Democracy Now crew, Tash, and ace kids in the Australian Student Environment Network.



Summit Protests and Networks

With the emergence of the summit protest movement into the public eye after J18 and Seattle, anarchism gained an influence way beyond what the numbers of anarchists and the level of anarchist organisation might have led you to predict. Quite quickly in the English speaking world, anarchism emerged from being a fairly obscure and historical critique of the left to become one of the main poles in the globalisation movement. It was not the long-existing anarchist organisations that achieved this. For the most part it was a new generation of activists using much more informal methods of organisation and communication. Rather than seeking to build one powerful and united organisation, they built thousands of small, informal and often quite short-lived ones. In fact 'built' is probably too strong a word for a process that in many cases consisted of a few friends coming together to travel to a protest and act together during it.

The Internet and why this form of organisation came to the fore Revolutionary politics has always been strongly influenced by new technology. The emergence of the mass democratic rebellions in France, American and Ireland in the closing decades of the 18th century were linked to the advent of widespread literacy and access to printing. This allowed the rapid spread of quite complex republican ideas around the world. At the start of the new millennium it was the internet that allowed for a model of organisation of highly decentralised networks. Previously both international communication and one to many communication needed significant resources and so required mass organisation and a centralisation of resources. The web and email meant that for first time huge numbers of people could directly communicate internationally on a day-to-day basis. This allowed the coming into being of very large and informal networks. In terms of debate and organisation these could be no more formal than an email list. A single mail sent to one list could be picked up and forwarded to many others so the ideas of one individual or small collective could spread rapidly to large numbers of people whom they had never met. This tended to bypass existing organisations many of whom tended to see the internet as a threat rather than an opportunity . For a time it also threw the various state spying and police forces into disarray as they were used to a model where infiltration of one or a small number of centralised organisations could give them a very accurate picture of how many would attend something and what they were likely to do.

Simply put these new methods initially allowed activists to seemingly appear from nowhere and either shut down summits as in Seattle and Prague or, as in Quebec, force the state to imprison itself behind high walls and fences. It was suddenly possible for a small and poorly resourced group to communicate with and seek aid from people all over their continent. It was possible for those thinking of travelling to a protest to get quite detailed local information in advance through web sites and email lists. After a decade where the only thing of significance happening on the left was the Zapatistas the initial success of the summit protests seemed to represent an enormous leap forward.

The advantages of this form of organisation

The major advantage of this form of organisation is that it allowed the rapid development and growth of a movement of tens of thousands from a tiny base without significant resources. Almost without exception groups formed spontaneously, copying what they perceived as the success of what others were doing elsewhere. Their knowledge of the process was obtained not from individual contact or even books but from what people were writing on a multitude of web sites and email lists.

In the first years it was also possible for network organised summit protests to have a real impact on the various global capitalist summits. The business of both the 1999 World Trade Organisation (WTO) summit in Seattle and the 2000 World Bank summit in Prague was disrupted, in the case of Prague leading to the abandoning of the entire event as delegates fled the city. This was possible because initially the various state security forces who are used to dealing with top down, centralized organisations didn't know who to watch and what to take seriously. On a more local level the initial Reclaim the Streets event that were held in many cities around the globe also caused confusion amongst police forces unused to such organising methods.

Of course the state has enormous resources at its disposal and after some pretty disastrous experimentation - the Quebec NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) summit, also in 2000 - it adjusted to these new forms of organisation and developed new policing methods to deal with them. These new policing methods included an intense level of repression which saw the shooting of protesters at the Gothenburg and Genoa summits. Many of the Summits were also moved out of the big cities where protesters could easily gather to isolated locations and in the case of the World Bank to Qatar, a dictatorship!

In particular, after the September 11th terrorist attacks, when security became a very plausible excuse in the mind of the general public, the effectiveness of attempts to actually shut down or disrupt the summits of global capitalism plummeted. Protests and confrontations still occur at many summits but the summit delegates now see these on Sky News rather then right outside the buildings in which they meet. As such, the protests have become purely symbolic even if there are often frequent scuffles with whatever police force has drawn the short straw of protecting the world's elite that month

The network form of organisation is effective but also rather ruthless when it comes to experimentation with new methods and tactics. Each local group is free to go out and try out new ideas without consulting with anyone else first. If something obviously works then it is reported on and can be rapidly replicated elsewhere. The ruthless element is that this freedom to experiment without consultation also means that obvious failures that would have been spotted at the discussion phase in a more formal organisation slip through and people have to learn the hard way all too frequently. And the hard way can mean jailings or losing all local support for an action that was never going to make any difference anyway. In contrast a formal organisation would first need a formal geographically widespread debate over strategy and tactics before they could be implemented. While this may eliminate repeating the mistakes of the past it may also result in missed opportunities and certainly limits the number of new strategies that can be tried at any one time.

In the 1990's, with the bankruptcy of the old authoritarian left, it was precisely this space for experimentation and replication that allowed the rapid appearance of a new movement with new tactics and a new strategy created through 'walking the road' rather then studying the books.

What are the limitations it faces?

The state may be slow to respond but it is a massive structure of power with billions of dollars of resources and hundreds of thousands of dedicated personnel. So no single form of organisation, unless it is one that involves the majority of workers, will ever be able

to take it on in a straight fight.

This includes not only formal organisations but also informal decentralised methods of organisation. Many of the things that make network forms of organisation useful are also disadvantages in other respects. Their informality means that 'members' have a relatively weak commitment to them so for finance and resources they are often dependant of donations and loans from more formal organisations. The ease of getting involved (perhaps no more then signing up to an email list) also means they are easy for police, journalists and fascists to infiltrate and, if they are smart about it, to disrupt by carrying out provocations in the name of the network or issuing statements from what claims to be a node of a network designed simply to discredit the network as a whole. In the recent past we have an example in this in the letter bombing campaign carried out by an Italian group that nobody had ever heard of but which used the same initials as the largest Italian anarchist network, the FAI. In a network that has no formal structure it can be very hard to even issue a statement pointing out that such actions are not part of the network.

Beyond networks and protests

Network methods of organisation have proved to be very effective at organising one off summit protests. They have also played a vital role in building international solidarity, in particular with the Zapatista struggle in Chiapas in the mid-1990's. But the experience of those organising the summit protests suggests that in the aftermath the networks proved fragile and were unable to sustain a local impact.

In Argentina network forms of organisation proved capable of getting several presidents out of power and were able to help organise the occupations of dozens of factories but appear not to have made much progress towards overthrowing capitalism. The slogan was 'they all must go' but the reality was that there was always another candidate in the wings to fill the president's chair when it became vacant.

This does not prove that the network form or organisation is useless, nor that there is an alternative form of organisation that is better in all circumstances. But it does suggest a need to look at models of organisation beyond networks. Or rather at models intended to complement the network form of organisation and address those areas where it is weak.

The old left often took the attitude that there was one ideal form of organisation that could be scaled down to fill all needs and all circumstances.

For the Leninists that was often democratic centralism, the idea that putting a smart leadership in charge was the way forward. For some anarcho-syndicalists it was syndicalism but most anarchists have always favoured a plurality of organisational forms. From the late 19th century anarchists have advocated a number of forms of organisation. Sometimes given the nature of the debate these were put forward as polarised alternatives to each other. But some, like Bakunin, argued that all these forms of organisation should exist side by side and that anarchists should be involved in all of them.

What is needed is that committed anarchists also organise in anarchist political organisations that seek to provide the continuity, theoretical depth and tactical unity that networks, because of their advantages, lack. The main goal of networks is to organise lots and lots of people around a imited project (e.g. a single day's protest). Trying to develop any agreed theoretical depth in such a project would just limit the number of people who can be involved.

The role of anarchist organisations

Anarchist organisations have the resources to develop theoretical depth out of their experience across a range of networks and then take these ideas into individual networks and argue for them. Anarchist organisations also have the time to enter into the sort of historical and theoretical discussion that are not possible in a broad meeting that seeks to sort out the concrete organisational details of a specific event.

This sort of analysis is needed if we are to move from confronting the worst aspects of capitalism as they arise to building an alternative to capitalism.

The creation of an alternative is a long term project that needs to be able to deal with capitalism in all its different phases from social democratic to neo-liberal to fascist. In the past capitalism has been able to disband or suppress protest movements by simply shifting phase and either giving an apparent, if limited, victory (with a new social democratic government) or imposing repression that people are not prepared for (with fascism).

When it comes to doing work in trade unions or in communities where we can expect that many of those we are addressing and seeking to involve will be around for many years there is a real advantage in having a stable formal organisation. This can build up credibility and trust amongst those it wants to work with in a way that an informal network that comes and goes simply cannot sustain in the long term. There is something of a false debate facing the anti-capitalist movement. At one pole some put forward tight organisation. The Leninists of course want tightly centralized parties but even some libertarians see the answer to increasingly effective policing of protest in a turn towards more disciplined and perhaps semi-clandestine organisation. At the other pole most activists continue to put forward loose organisations as a solution in themselves, with some 'post-leftists' even arguing against any form of more co-ordinated organisation.

Both see the two organisational methods as in competition with each other. This need not be so, in fact for anarchists both forms should be complementary as the strengths of one are the weaknesses of the other and vice versa. The rapid growth of the movement has strongly favoured the network form, it's now time to look at also building its more coherent partner. That is to build specific anarchist organisations that will work in and with the networks as they emerge.

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